



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

November 2024

Volume 3

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UC APPLICATION: PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS TRICKS

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu

Imagine UC was a person. If we met face-to-face, what would you want us to know about you? These personal insight questions allow you to tell us. You could write about your creative side. Your thoughts on leadership. A challenge you've faced. Whatever questions you answer, make sure you show us your personality—just as you would in real life.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO PREPARE FOR THE 2025-26 FAFSA TO OPEN ON DECEMBER 1ST

schoollink.com



Prior to December 1st, students and parents can create their FSA ID, a requisite first step of FAFSA completion. To create an FSA ID, students, parents, and other contributors must initiate creating an FSA ID and then wait 1-3 days for verification. Check [the Federal Student Aid website](https://www.fafsa.gov) for updates.

TOP 10 COLLEGES FOR FINANCIAL AID, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCETON REVIEW — ONE IS IN THE IVY LEAGUE

[cnbc.com](https://www.cnbc.com)

Without financial aid, the price tag at some four-year colleges and universities — after factoring in tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses — is now nearing \$100,000 a year.

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UC APPLICATION: PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS TRICKS

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Keep in mind

- All questions are equal. All are given equal consideration in the application review process, which means there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.
- There is no right or wrong way to answer these questions. It's about getting to know your personality, background, interests and achievements in your own unique voice.
- Use the additional comments field if there are issues you'd like to address that you didn't have the opportunity to discuss elsewhere on the application. This shouldn't be an essay, but rather a place to note unusual circumstances or anything that might be unclear in other parts of the application.

Remember, the personal insight questions are just that—personal. The important thing is expressing who you are, what matters to you and what you want to share with UC.

1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.

Things to consider: A leadership role can mean more than just a title. It can mean being a mentor to others, acting as the person in charge of a specific task, or taking the lead role in organizing an event or project. Think about what you accomplished and what you learned from the experience. What were your responsibilities?

2. Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.

Things to consider: What does creativity mean to you? Do you have a creative skill that is important to you? What have you been able to do with that skill? If you used creativity to solve a problem, what was your solution? What are the steps you took to solve the problem? How does your creativity influence your decisions inside or outside the classroom? Does your creativity relate to your major or a future

"There is no right or wrong way to answer these questions."

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu





COLLEGE NEWS

- Incoming freshmen at **UC San Diego** are now required to take a class on climate change
- **Gonzaga University** is the first in Washington State to offer an Etiquette Consulting Certificate meant to give people the knowledge needed to start a business as an etiquette consultant or serve as an in house etiquette specialist.
- The new Climate Resilience Center for Alaska will bring together researchers from the **University of Alaska Fairbanks** with **Los Alamos National Laboratory** with three goals: 1) enhance communication with Alaska communities about existing DOE science, 2) develop meaningful collaborations between communities and the DOE, and 3) incorporate DOE science into educational pathways and opportunities.
- **Utah** launches statewide guaranteed admissions initiative at all 16 of the state's public colleges and universities, the Utah System of Higher Education.
- An investigation is underway after two **UCLA** students said they were drugged while attending several parties near campus, police announced.
- **UC Berkeley** is the No. 1 public university in the U.S and the eighth-best university in the world, according to the Times Higher Education's 2025 World University Rankings, released on Oct. 8. Berkeley has held the ranking of top U.S. public university for nine of the past 10 years.
- **The University of Oregon** recently received \$2 million in funding from the Oregon State Legislature to help more students develop the skills to work in the semiconductor industry, the school announced.
- Gov. Newsom signs bill banning legacy admissions at California private universities like **Stanford and University of Southern California**. The law is set to take effect on Sept. 1, 2025. Among California's public university systems, the California State University (CSU) already does not consider legacy or donor relations in admissions and the University of California stopped doing so in 1998.
- More than 3,000 runners participating in the Portland Marathon will run through the **Reed College** campus as they push through mile 18.
- The **University of Puget Sound** has been honored once again for its academic excellence, securing a spot among the Best National Liberal Arts Colleges by U.S. News & World Report. The university claimed the #95 spot in a highly competitive category among universities nationwide.
- Need a blazer or button-up for your next job interview? Find one at Bucky's Closet at **Santa Clara University**—a free campus thrift store for business attire opened September 2024.
- The **University of Redlands** has a long history with music, in fact, many of the dorm buildings on campus have pianos.
- **Willamette University** biologists secure \$200,000 grant to study Joshua tree resilience to climate change

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- ACT - Next test date is December 14th. You must register by November 8th. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo.
- SAT - Next test date is December 7th. You must register by November 22nd.

SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Attend virtual college meetings
- Keep your grades up.
- Register for the SAT or ACT
- FAFSA opened October 1st for a soft launch
- Start working on your common app essay
- Research scholarships.
- Early Action Deadline November 15th
- UC Deadline November 30th
- Register for the Common Application



UC APPLICATION: PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS TRICKS

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3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

Things to consider: If there is a talent or skill that you're proud of, this is the time to share it. You don't necessarily have to be recognized or have received awards for your talent (although if you did and you want to talk about it, feel free to do so). Why is this talent or skill meaningful to you?

4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

Things to consider: An educational opportunity can be anything that has added value to your educational experience and better prepared you for college. For example, participation in an honors or academic enrichment program, or enrollment in an academy that's geared toward an occupation or a major, or taking advanced courses that interest you; just to name a few.

5. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?

Things to consider: A challenge could be personal, or something you have faced in your community or school. Why was the challenge significant to you? This is a good opportunity to talk about any obstacles you've faced and what you've learned from the experience. Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone?

6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.

Things to consider: Many students have a passion for one specific academic subject area, something that they just can't get enough of. If that applies to you, what have you done to further that interest?

7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

Things to consider: Think of community as a term that can encompass a group, team or a place like your high school, hometown or home. You can define community as you see fit, just make sure you talk about your role in that community.

"Don't rush to be first to submit the FAFSA"

CNBC.COM

FAFSA opens on limited basis Oct. 1st and for everyone on Dec. 1st





SCHOLARSHIPS

- **RON BROWN SCHOLAR PROGRAM** - Offers four-year renewable awards for \$10,000 per year to African American high school seniors who plan to attend college full-time. Scholarship is based on financial need, academic achievement, essay, extracurricular activities, leadership experience, community service and recommendations. Deadline: December 1st, 2024
- **ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** - Awards 500 four-year scholarships to the highest-rated applicants in the 2025 competition. Ranging from \$1,000 per year to \$7,500 per year. Deadline: November 12th 2024.
- **THE COOKE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM** - is an undergraduate scholarship program available to high-achieving high school seniors with financial need who seek to attend and graduate from the nation's best four-year colleges and universities. Deadline: November 14th 2024
- **EDUCATION MATTERS SCHOLARSHIP** - The Education Matters Scholarship is giving you the chance to state why education matters. One applicant will be awarded \$5,000 scholarship. Deadline: November 30th, 2024
- **BIG FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP** - Enter to win \$500 and \$40,000 scholarship to college. No essay. Deadline: November 30th 2024.
- **OVERCOMING ADVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP** - This \$1,000 award will be given to a student who has overcome adversity and emerged stronger. Deadline: November 30th, 2024
- **TOP TEN LIST SCHOLARSHIP** - Tell us what's truly special and different about you for a chance to win a \$1,500 scholarship. Deadline: December 31st, 2024
- **HISPANIC HERITAGE YOUTH AWARDS** - honors Latino high school seniors who excel in the classroom and community and for their excellence in various categories including: Community Service, Education, Engineering, Entrepreneurship & Business, Green Sustainability, Healthcare & Science, Media & Entertainment, Public Service & Social Justice, and Technology. Application is now open.
- **ELEVATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SCHOLARSHIP** - Students applying to the scholarship will be required to write an essay about how their experience with mental health has influenced their beliefs, relationships, and career aspirations. Deadline: November 30th 2024

HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Manages 70 of the largest need based scholarship opportunities in the country for high school seniors who have faced or overcome obstacles. Scholarships by state and by career.





TOP 10 COLLEGES FOR FINANCIAL AID, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCETON REVIEW — ONE IS IN THE IVY LEAGUE

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But even though college is getting more expensive, students and their parents rarely pay the full amount.

Aside from their income and savings, most families rely on federal aid, which may include loans, work-study and grants, to help bridge the “affordability gap,” according to Sameer Gadkaree, president of The Institute for College Access and Success, a nonprofit organization that promotes college affordability.

Still, “we have created this situation where students can’t just work their way through college without taking on debt,” he said. “It’s simply, the math doesn’t work.”

Problems with the new federal student aid application form have heightened families’ concerns and early signs show that FAFSA issues could continue into the upcoming application season. Already, the U.S. Department of Education recently announced a delayed start in December.

With cost the No. 1 college concern among families, issues with the FAFSA “will continue to affect students and their parents,” said Robert Franek, The Princeton Review’s editor in chief.

That’s where financial assistance from a college can be key.

To that end, The Princeton Review ranked colleges by how satisfied students are with their packages. The 2025 edition of the company’s college guide is based on data from surveys of 168,000 students in the 2023-24 school year.

The schools that ranked the highest not only deliver on assistance, but also on calming concerns about college affordability, Franek said:

“These colleges are saying, ‘You do not have to mortgage your future to pay for school — we are meeting you where you are.’”

Among some of the schools near the top of The Princeton Review’s list, the average scholarship grant awarded in 2023-24 to students with need was more than \$70,000. Of all the financial aid opportunities the FAFSA opens up, grants are the most desirable kind of assistance because they typically do not need to be repaid.

“The takeaway is that they are noting the difficulty that students are having with financial aid and the general fear around scholarship dollars and literally directing financial aid to defuse that worry and that stress” Franek said.

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Early Action Deadline
November 1st-15th

UC Deadline
November 30th





TOP 10 COLLEGES FOR FINANCIAL AID, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCETON REVIEW — ONE IS IN THE IVY LEAGUE

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- 1. Skidmore College:** Saratoga Springs, New York
Sticker price: \$85,230
Average need-based scholarship: \$53,700
Total out-of-pocket cost: \$31,530
Average share of need met for first-year students: 100%
- 2. Gettysburg College:** Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Sticker price: \$82,750
Average need-based scholarship: \$54,032
Total out-of-pocket cost: \$28,718
Average share of need met for first-year students: 90%
- 3. Washington University:** St. Louis
Sticker price: \$87,644
Average need-based scholarship: \$65,777
Total out-of-pocket cost: \$21,867
Average share of need met for first-year students: 100%
- 4. Olin College of Engineering:** Needham, Massachusetts
Sticker price: \$86,993
Average need-based scholarship: \$56,825
Total out-of-pocket cost: \$30,168
Average share of need met for first-year students: 100%
- 5. Wabash College:** Crawfordsville, Indiana
Sticker price: \$65,200
Average need-based scholarship: \$39,846
Total out-of-pocket cost: \$25,354
Average share of need met for first-year students: 94%
- 6. College of the Atlantic**
- 7. Thomas Aquinas College**
- 8. Reed College**
- 9. Williams College**
- 10. Princeton University**

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